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SOURCE Minju Chesin.

TELECOMMUNICATIONS SYSTEM IN NORTH KOREA

North Korea's telecommunications system is satisfactory in terms of quantity, but it is poor in quality. The current situation of the telephone and telegraph facilities of North Korea is summarized below.

Materials and Equipment

There have been some shortcomings found both in the supply and in the use of materials and equipment. In obtaining materials, whether through purchase or donation, no careful inspection is made to determine whether they meet the specifications with regard to the quality, size, workability, and the use to which materials are put. So far, there are no written specifications prescribing standards for all materials.

Judging from past records, the degeneration of the telecommunications facilities in terms of quality was due largely to the poor selection and utilization of materials. The importance of using the right materials in the right place has been generally overlooked.

Planning and Method of Engineering

Short-sighted planning in the network layout, including surveying, selecting of route, location, setting up posts, etc., has been one of the serious drawbacks. To cite specific examples, overhead wires have been installed without due regard to what is required both now and in the future. Consequently, unnecessary waste occurs later when circuits are installed and changes are required in the original layout. Improper installation, which causes faster breakdown of the network, has been found in the main lines as well as in branch lines. In areas where natural hazards, such as heavy snow and storms are frequent, the wires installed are of improper size and they cannot withstand hazards. Distances between posts are too far for such areas without reinforcement of some kind.

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Wiring is done inefficiently in both straight and curved line formations, such as laying the wires counter to the terrain, unevenness of distances between posts, unevenness of the heights of posts, etc.

The entire situation, however, seems to point to the lack of technical knowledge on the part of technicians along with the shortage of skilled workers in this field. Since this has been the basic problem, efforts on the part of the central and local authorities concerned are being strongly demanded for improvement in the supply of capable technicians.

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